

Union Township Environmental Commission

Minutes of the July 8, 2008 Regular Meeting

The July 8, 2008 Regular Meeting of the Union Township Environmental Commission was called to order at 7:00 PM.

The notice of meeting as published in the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Courier-News satisfied the requirements of the Open Public Meeting Act, and was also posted in the Municipal Building, on the Union Township website and filed with the Municipal Clerk.

I. Roll call:

Present: Bill Harclerode, Stephen Hurford, Michele McBride, Sandy Stiger, John Wingler
Absent: Kathleen Corcoran, Bob Beylickjian, Chuck Neary

II. Approval of Minutes:

Mrs. Stiger made a motion to approve the minutes. Michele McBride seconded the motion. All approved, while John Wingler abstained.

III. Chairmans Report:

1. Mr. Harclerode stated that a resident, Gail Cookson, contacted the Environmental Commission regarding an "adopt a road" program for the Township, to clean up litter. Mrs. Corcoran had stated that she would follow up with Ms. Cookson. There is nothing to report as Mrs. Corcoran was absent.
2. At the last Township Committee meeting, the Stormwater Management Plan came up, and there is an annual public session requirement. Since we have a public information requirement associated with the Sidney Brook Study, Chairman Harclerode offered to the Township Committee that the Environmental Commission include the Stormwater Management Plan in that public session. This will probably occur in Sept. or Oct. of 2008.
3. Mr. Harclerode stated that Matt Severino is the representative in charge of recycling in the Township. Mr. Severino gave him a draft of the current Township recycling program, and asked for comments. Ms. McBride said that she would help out with providing comments. There was some discussion regarding the Township recycling program. Mr. Harclerode stated that he made a few phone calls and there is something called "single source". There was some discussion about lack of township pick up for odd, undesirable or larger items, including appliances. There is a new thing in recycling, where the facility will accept all plastics, metals and newspapers in one bin. It is called "green start" and will pay \$35 per ton. Mr. Harclerode will speak more with Mr. Severino, and discuss potential options for this. There was some discussion regarding other things that it would be useful to dispose of, such as construction debris/lumber. Other issues discussed are tires and appliances that are disposed of regularly on private properties in some areas of town. Bill plans to work with Mr. Severino and Ms. McBride to find out what is best for the town.
5. Mr. Harclerode mentioned that the boy scouts get paid for roadside cleanups from the state. He stated that he will look into this with the Twp. Committee.
6. We have an approved budget of \$4,000 for administrative support. Mr. Harclerode spoke with Mr. Bischoff of the Twp. Committee re: administrative support for the Environmental Commission and there is currently no budget to hire somebody for this effort; however a budget could be established for next year. Mr. Harclerode suggested that Mrs. Corcoran, the UTEC Secretary, be reimbursed for preparing minutes. Ms. McBride made a motion that Mrs. Corcoran be reimbursed \$25 for each meeting minutes, which would amount to about \$300 per year. All approved, while Mr. Hurford abstained.

IV. Committee Reports:

Open Space Committee:

1. Sandy stated that she doesn't believe that much has been done within the Township re: the LUCARS system, and updates that were required in order to make the system able to show the environmental conservation easements, etc. This will be a huge amount of effort to identify all the easements, but it is required in order to obtain funds from the State Open Space Fund. It would require pulling records from each open property. Ms. McBride suggested that the Highlands planning could be tied in with this and there is potential funding available through them. This will require multiple visits to the County Hall of Records and reviewing Township files on newer subdivisions. Ms. Stiger stated that there are options, but it would be ridiculous to continue unless there is some long term follow up to the information gathering. Mendham is an example for hiring a consultant to handle these things, but for a lot of money. Ms. McBride suggested that we pick one area and work to get that completed, as a "pilot" program. There was some concern about public perception of "picking on" one neighborhood versus another to start with. There was additional discussion regarding how we could store the information that is obtained.
2. Mr. Harclerode stated that he knows that they've done it in Bethlehem Township. He would be willing to help out. He suggested that for now we could work on updating our open space plan and mapping of easements and updating the environmental resource inventory.
3. Mr. Harclerode stated that the Twp. Council has applied for \$15,000 grant funding from the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council, which will fund preliminary conformance with the Highlands Plan.

Trails:

1. Mr. Hurford stated that the horse people are dealing directly with the Township Committee regarding signage for the horse trail crossings. They will not work with the Environmental Commission because they do not want the trail locations to be made public information.

Property Stewardship:

1. Ms. McBride stated that the Historical Society has given the OK to move forward with the Hoffman House tunnel demolition. Mr. McBride and Mr. Hurford put the permit applications together. The propane tank and pool have been removed. Electrical work is mostly complete. Plumbing is completed. Mason work will begin shortly and then tunnel demolition can begin. It was found that electrical is coming in from a power house located near the road. Work is ongoing and will be for the next few weeks.
2. A meeting with Mike Romanek, who attended the last EC meeting and expressed interest in leasing the Hoffman Property barns, is scheduled for July 12, 2008 to go through the barns and discuss green acres and what will be allowed, and what his plans are. The county will also be heavily involved in approving what Mr. Romanek proposes for the use of the barns.
3. Re: Douglas Farm, Brian Kirkpatrick attended the last stewardship meeting and spent a good deal of time discussing preservation and funding sources. He provided useful information. He mentioned that the Douglas contract and all the riders should be reviewed to make sure that there are no restrictions on the use of the property. Ms. McBride spoke with the Twp. Committee about this and will be meeting with Peter Jost to look at the contract. Ms. McBride will also speak with Green Acres to determine any encumbrances that they may have on the property. Paige DiRoberto of the Property Stewardship Subcommittee has agreed to attend a meeting with Green Acres with Ms. McBride.
4. Mr. Wingler and Ms. McBride walked through the Douglas farm, and the frame barn next to the road is in bad shape. The back end is in very bad shape, but the front end is in the Rock Hill Historic District which could be an issue if we ever had to demolish it. NJ Barns Company is more interested in restoring and resurrecting barns than harvesting the wood. This may not be the company we should be dealing with. The objective is to minimize our liability on this property, at minimal cost. Mr. Wingler is awaiting a call back from another company and will emphasize our intentions for the property. The front part of the barn dates back to the 1850s. Poison ivy is everywhere and needs to be removed as it adds moisture and will aid in deterioration of the wood.
5. It was discussed that the Douglas Farm tenant house probably cannot be rented out while the barn is in such bad condition. Mr. Hurford stated that his understanding is that the property cannot be subdivided or the Douglas Family will have the right to buy the property back for

the price that the Twp. paid for the property. The focus is on dealing with making the barn safe or removing it from the site.

6. Ms. McBride stated that re: Milligan Farms, Skip Jonas is proposing a stewardship program for Rutgers University and will present his ideas at the end of the summer.
7. Ms. McBride stated that her property stewardship subcommittee is presenting at a Hunterdon County Planning Bd. breakfast talk on July 30, 2008 at 7:30 am at the Alexandria Twp. Park Equestrian Facility. All are encouraged to come.

Road & Train Noise:

1. Mr. Harclerode stated that the Road Noise Subcommittee sent out 60 "dear mayor" letters to municipalities along the Rt. 78 and 31 corridors, asking for their sign in on the resolution to ban unmuffled engine braking. We also sent out ten press releases. Also, Mayors Schaumburg and Mazza cosponsored a resolution to go to the NJ League of Municipalities for sponsoring a council resolution that will be forwarded to all NJ municipalities.
2. Mr. Harclerode confirmed that the NJDOT has awarded the low noise asphalt repaving of Rt. 78 in our area. The contract was awarded to Trap Rock Industries and is scheduled to begin at the end of August 2008. Construction will last about two months.
3. Mr. Harclerode spoke with Ted Frankenbach re: quiet crossing at Perryville Rd. He has been into the federal database and found that it hasn't been updated in 10 years. Mr. Harclerode requested that Mr. Frankenbach take part in this effort and he has forwarded the contact information to him. This is ongoing.

V. Communication and Education:

1. Ms. McBride discussed the next newsletter, and whether we should do this as a website publishing versus mailing to all residents. There was some discussion regarding this, and it was decided that the mailing should continue. The website can be updated with information on a regular basis, and could also include the newsletter.
2. Ms. McBride suggested that the next newsletter should include the Highlands Plan because the regional master plan is to be approved in July, which will affect our municipality.
3. Mr. Wingler discussed an idea for the newsletter: To recommend using paint that has no volatile organic compounds (VOCs). He stated that the store that sells this paint also has bamboo flooring and other green design materials.
4. Mr. Harclerode stated that the Sidney Brook Study is ongoing. The sampling phase is scheduled to be underway. Mr. Harclerode will email Ms. Altomari to find out the status. Ms. McBride suggested that we could put highlights of the Study into the next newsletter.
5. Regarding the Twp. website, Ms. McBride suggested that the Sidney Brook Study reports be simplified and put onto the Twp. website. She also suggested that basic information on what is required to get building permits, etc. onto the Twp. website. Also it would be helpful to have Twp. ordinances on the website.

VI. Adjournment:

1. Mr. Harclerode stated that there is no meeting next month. There is a Pilot public hearing at the municipal building on August 13th regarding the water quality management plan amendment for the expansion to the wastewater treatment system on the property. All were requested to attend.
2. The Chairman asked for a motion to adjourn. It was moved by Mr. Hurford, seconded by Mrs. McBride, and approved by a 4-0 vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Corcoran, Secretary